

Rise of Islam – 610CE – 700CE

Muhammad c. 570 CE – 8 June 632 CE was an Arab religious, social and political leader and the founder of Islam.

According to Islamic doctrine, he was a prophet, sent to present and confirm the monotheistic teachings preached previously by Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and other prophets. He was heavily influenced by the Jewish faith from the large Jewish population in his home town of Mecca.

He is viewed as the final prophet of God in all the main branches of Islam. Muhammad united Arabia into a single Muslim polity, with the Quran as well as his teachings and practices forming the basis of Islamic religious belief. He is referred to by many appellations, including Messenger of Allah, The Prophet Muhammad, Allah's Apostle, Last Prophet of Islam.

Born about 570 CE in the Arabian city of Mecca, Muhammad was orphaned at the age of six. He was raised under the care of his paternal grandfather and his uncle. When he was 40, Muhammad reported being visited by Gabriel in the cave, and receiving his first revelation from God. Three years later, in 610, Muhammad started preaching these revelations publicly, proclaiming that "God is One", that complete "submission" (islām) to God is the right way of life, and that he was a prophet and messenger of God, similar to the other prophets in Islam.

The followers of Muhammad were initially few in number, and experienced hostility from Meccan polytheists. He sent some of his followers to Abyssinia in 615 to shield them from prosecution, before he and his followers migrated from Mecca to Medina in 622. In Medina, Muhammad united the tribes under the Constitution of Medina. In December 629, after eight years of intermittent fighting with Meccan tribes, Muhammad gathered an **army of 10,000 Muslim converts** and marched on the city of Mecca. The conquest went largely uncontested and Muhammad seized the city with little bloodshed. In 632, he fell ill and died. **By the time of his death, most of the Arabian Peninsula had converted to Islam.**

Spread of Islam 700CE – 1200CE

Islam spread quickly throughout the Mediterranean, Africa and Indian subcontinent through trade but also by conquest. Within 6 years of Muhammad's death, Jerusalem was under Muslim control.

In 638 CE, the Islamic Caliphate extended its dominion to Jerusalem & Palestine. With the Arab conquest of the region, Jews were allowed back into the city. The majority population of Jerusalem during the time of Arab conquest was Christian, the majority of the Palestine population of about 300,000-400,000 inhabitants, was still Jewish. In the

aftermath, cultural Arabization and Islamization took place, combining immigration to Palestine with the adoption of Arabic language and conversion of part of population to Islam. The Dome of the Rock was built on the site of the Temple in 690CE and the Al-Aqsa Mosque in the early 700'sCE.

The Islamization of Jerusalem refers to the religious transformation of the city that occurred three times in history.

1. 70CE – Jewish Temple destroyed by Romans & many Jews taken as slaves. But many Jews (and growing number of Christians) still lived in surrounding area (Palestine).
2. 638CE – 1099CE (450 yrs) - The **first Islamization** of Jerusalem followed the Islamic Conquest of Jerusalem by Umar ibn Al-Khattāb. The Dome of the Rock was built on the site of the Temple in 690CE and the Al- Aqsa Mosque in the early 700'sCE.
3. In 1099, Jerusalem was **conquered by the Crusaders**, who massacred most of its Muslim and Jewish inhabitants. The Crusaders created the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Jerusalem's population declined from 70,000 to less than 30,000.
4. 1200CE – 1950CE (700 yrs) - The **second Islamization** followed the fall of Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem, followed by Muslim rule with dominant Islamic culture until the late Ottoman era (late 1800's). In early 20th Century, Jerusalem turned increasingly multi-cultural, gradually becoming predominantly Jewish again.
5. 1950 – 67 (17 yrs) - With the Jordanian annexation of the West Bank, Jerusalem underwent **another round of Islamization and Arabization**. During the Arab-Israel War, Jordan's army conquered the Old City of Jerusalem and controlled the West Bank. The West Bank was formally annexed on 24 April 1950. The annexation was widely considered illegal and void by the international community. Jordan's annexation was only recognized by the Britain, Iraq and Pakistan. Jordan granted full citizenship rights to the residents of the West Bank, which doubled the population of Jordan. The naturalized Palestinians enjoyed equal opportunities in all sectors of the state without discrimination, and they were given half of the seats of the Jordanian parliament.
6. **Islamization of Jerusalem by Jordanians (1950-67CE)**: While Christian holy sites were protected, and Muslim holy sites were maintained and renovated, Jewish holy sites were damaged and sometimes destroyed. During Jordanian rule, 34 out of the Old City's 35 synagogues were dynamited." The Western Wall was transformed into an exclusively Muslim holy site. 38,000 Jewish graves in the ancient Jewish cemetery on the Mount of Olives were destroyed, and Jews

were not allowed to be buried there. This was all in violation of the Israel-Jordan Armistice Agreement. Jordan expelled the Jewish residents of the Old City and allowed Arab Muslim refugees to settle in the vacated Jewish Quarter.

7. **1967 – present – In 6-Day War**, Israel seized Jerusalem and the West Bank from Jordan (and Golan & Sinai). The Palestinians there remained Jordanian citizens until **Jordan decided to renounce claims and sever administrative ties with the territory in 1988**.

8. **Israel has occupied the West Bank since 1967**. It also has declared West Jerusalem as its capital. Access to the holy sites in the Old City is open to worshipers of all faiths (Jews not allowed on Temple Mount). BUT, between 1995 and 2001, the Islamic Waqf (religious authority that controls Temple Mount) carried out extensive construction work with plans to build a huge mosque. The unsupervised construction, obliterated many of the original Herodian structure of the Solomon's Stables section of Temple Mount. At the eastern Hulda Gate, the Waqf destroyed the original Herodian ornamentation and later plastered and painted them over. Tens of truckloads of dirt were dumped into the Kidron Valley. Thousands of artifacts from the First Temple period were later rescued by the Israelis. The findings included 1000 ancient coins, Israelite bullas with ancient Hebrew inscriptions, 10,000-year-old tools like a blade and scraper, as well as Hasmonean, Ptolemaic and Herodian artifacts, ancient stones with signs of Second Temple destruction and other important artifacts. The Waqf justified its action by calling the site a "mosque from the time of Adam and Eve" - rejecting any Jewish historical connection with the site.